

LETTERS

ascension to the officer corps. This would, perhaps, solve another problem—the dwindling supply of Acquisition Corps officers.

As you see, this is only in the embryonic stage and a radical concept to some. But Army regulations already make allowances for direct commissions for procurement personnel. The problem with this regulation is that it does not take into account that a person must be a captain or higher to become a member of the Acquisition Corps and the direct commission is restricted to the rank of lieutenant, with age restrictions as well as others.

The National Guard is aging as is the regular Army. The world is very competitive and is drawing experi-

enced and government-educated people away at an alarming rate. We must be competitive if we are to be mission capable.

Please pass this e-mail on to the majors as food for thought.

Thanks
Mike Belovsky
Contracting Officer

Army AL&T Response: Thank you for your letter. It has been forwarded to Majors Metts and Castrinos.

ACQUISITION REFORM

FORSCOM Conducts First Reverse Auction

The Third Corps and Fort Hood Contracting Command recently conducted the Army Forces Command's (FORSCOM's) first reverse auction, using the software available on the U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command's (CECOM's) Interagency Business Opportunities Page Web site. Fort Hood used this innovative e-commerce tool to obtain a 10.67-percent savings over the estimated product price and significant quality increases.

The requirement was for 40 Pentium III, 650 MHz, 8-GB hard-drive-capacity CPUs, each with a 250-MB Zip drive and optical mouse, estimated to cost \$1,500 each. Subsequently, 40 Gateway Pentium III, 733 MHz, 15-GB hard-drive CPUs, each with a 250-MB Zip drive, a 1-MB video card, an Internet keyboard, and an optical mouse, were purchased at a final cost of \$1,340 each. All minimum requirements were met, and exceeded in many cases.

Fort Hood conducted a private auction with four small-business General Services Administration (GSA) vendors. The vendors were selected through a market research process. To keep a level playing field, each company was classified as either a small or small-

disadvantaged business. Fort Hood spent approximately 6 days preparing for the reverse auction and made the delivery order award on the day the auction was completed. Offerors were informally debriefed the day after the award.

Fort Hood was satisfied with the reverse auction and plans to hold other auctions for future requirements that are acceptable for the auctioning process. In addition, Fort Hood foresees using reverse auction procedures to augment other procurement methods, such as a two-step sealed bid process. During the first step, technical requirements are negotiated with the offerors. In the second step, a reverse auction is conducted to determine the final contract price, and ultimately, the contract winner.

CECOM has placed this new software on the Army Single Face to Industry Web site (<http://acquisition.army.mil.default.htm>) so the entire Army can use it. Many companies that offer only low-bid reverse auction software charge a percentage of sales, whereas CECOM's program is available to the entire Army at no cost.